

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

MCT-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 /088 W

-----151851Z 043790 /43

P R 151730Z MAR 77

FM AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1973

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER//ECJ4/7

DIA WASH DC

SECDEF WASH DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUBUMBASHI 41

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, PINS, CG, AO

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON SHABA RESPONSE TO INVASION

1. SUMMARY. MILITARY PROFILE IN COPPER BELT TOWNS IN SHABA HAS BEEN LOWERED AFTER EARLIER HIGH MILITARY VISIBILITY CREATED MORE ANXIETY THAN REASSURANCE. MEANWHILE, REPORTS FROM THE WEST INDICATE DETERIORATION IN MILITARY SITUATION FROM ZAIRE'S POINT OF VIEW. ZAIRIAN FORCES HAVE NOT RECAPTURED ANY LOST TERRITORY IN LAST 48 HOURS, AND HAVE REPORTEDLY LOST KASAJI. SERIOUS DIESEL SHORTAGE HAMPERING ZAIRIAN REACTION. TRIBAL DIVISIONS IN OCCUPIED AREA COULD PROVIDE INVADERS WITH SYMPATHIZERS AMONG LOCAL
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POPULATION.

2. AFTER FIRST REACTING TO INVASION WITH TIGHT SECURITY MEASURES AND SHOW OF FORCE, INCLUDING CURFEWS IN MAJOR COPPERBELT CITIES, MILITARY BARRICADES THROUGHOUT LUBUMBASHI AND LUBUMBASHI-KOLWEZI ROAD, AND SPECTACULAR OVERFLIGHT BY TWO FAZ MIRAGES ON MARCH 11, GOZ HAS DECIDED TO LOWER MILITARY PROFILE IN CITIES

IN ATTEMPT TO CALM SITUATION. CURFEWS WERE LIFTED MARCH 12, BARRICADES WITHIN LUBUMBASHI HAVE ALL BUT VANISHED, AND ACCORDING TO VP ENGULU OVERFLIGHTS OF CITIES BY MIRAGES HAVE BEEN BANNED BY PRESIDENT MOBUTU AFTER REPORTS OF CONSIDERABLE ANXIETY CREATED AMONG LOCAL POPULATION BY MARCH 11 SHOW. DIMINISHED MILITARY PRESENCE SEEMS TO HAVE REASSURED LOCAL POPULATION, BUT REPORTS OF ADVANCE BY INVADERS AND FALL OF ZAIRIAN TOWNS, TRUE AND EXAGGERATED, CONTINUE TO SWEEP CITY. GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF LUBUMBASHI AT PRESENT, HOWEVER, IS VERY CALM.

3. DECISION TO REDUCE MILITARY VISIBILITY IN CITIES COINCIDES WITH ALARMING REPORTS FROM BATTLE AREA. ZAIRIAN TROOPS DO NOT YET SEEM TO HAVE SOUGHT CONFRONTATION WITH ENEMY. TEMPORARY OCCUPATION OF KASAJI AND DIVUMA ACCOMPLISHED IN ABSENCE OF OPPOSING FORCE. ONLY REPORTED MILITARY INCIDENTS INVOLVE AMBUSHES OF ZAIRIANS BY INVADERS. REPORTS CONTINUE OF TROOPS FLEEING BATTLE SCENE ON FIRST NOTICE OF DANGER. ON MARCH 14, THE RAILROAD COMPANY (SNCZ), METHODIST AND CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES ALL REPORTED FALL OF KASAJI, WHICH HAD BEEN IN HANDS OF FAZ PREVIOUS DAY. SNCZ REPORTS ALL STATIONS WEST OF POINT 60 KILOMETERS WEST OF MUTSHATSHA NO LONGER RESPOND TO RADIO COMMUNICATIONS. MANY REPORTED FLEEING WEST OF MUTSHATSHA, AND SNCZ SAYS MUTSHATSHA MOOD APPROACHING PANIC. SNCZ REPORTS FIVE FAZ ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS APPARENTLY CAPTURED OR DESTROYED BY ENEMY BETWEEN MUTSHATSHA AND KASAJI, AND RECONNAISSANCE TEAM LED BY A COLONEL HEADING WEST FROM MUTSHATSHA APPARENTLY CAPTURED BY INVADERS. MEANWHILE, KAPANGA AND KISENGE REMAIN OUT OF COMMUNICATION WITH LUBUMBASHI, AND ARE PRESUMABLY STILL IN HANDS OF INVADERS. METHODIST MISSIONARIES REPORTED THAT
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"NON-ZAIRIAN" TROOPS PASSED THROUGH SANDOA MORNING OF MARCH 13 SAYING THEY DID NOT INTEND TO OCCUPY THE TOWN. FAZ PARATROOPERS REPORTED TO HAVE LANDED IN AFTERNOON, BUT NO NEWS OF A BATTLE. INVADERS COULD HAVE HEADED FOR KASAJI ALONG ONE OF FEW GOOD ROADS IN REGION AND PARTICIPATED IN SEIZURE OF THAT TOWN. RECAPTURE OF KASAJI ESSENTIAL TO FAZ AS IT IS CROSSROADS OF ROAD NETWORK OF ENTIRE OCCUPIED REGION.

4. FAZ RESPONSE HINDERED BY DIESEL SHORTAGE. SNCZ REPORTS IT HAS ONLY 3-4 DAY SUPPLY, AND THAT ONLY THANKS TO LOAN FROM GECAMINES. SITUATION PARTICULARLY ACUTE IN OCCUPIED AREA, AS RAILROAD WEST OF MUTSHATSHA RUNS ON DIESEL (TO EAST LINE IS ELECTRIFIED). PETROZAIRE HAS NO HARD CURRENCY AND ZAMBIA HAS BEEN HARD-NOSED IN DEMANDING CASH PAYMENT FOR FUEL FROM SHELL NDOLA REFINERY. SNCZ REPORTS MILITARY FRONT REQUIREMENTS OF 288 CUBIC METERS OF DIESEL PER WEEK. SNCZ HAS ASKED CONSULATE IF USG CAN BE OF ASSISTANCE IN BREAKING LOGJAM, WHICH THREATENING TO CURTAIL SERIOUSLY FAZ RESPONSE TO INVASION.

5. SKETCHY REPORTS FROM WEST INDICATE THAT INVADERS HAVE NOT MALTREATED INDIGENOUS POPULATION, WHICH WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR SELF-IMAGE AS LIBERATORS. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS TO EFFECT INVADERS RECRUITING IN DILOLO, KISENGE AND KAPANGA. TRIBAL DIVISIONS IN AREA MAY FACILITATE INVADERS' OBJECTIVES. THOSE OF LUNDA AND TSHOKWE ORIGIN REPORTEDLY STAYING IN PLACE (THOUGH OFTEN SENDING DEPENDENTS TO VILLAGES), WHILE OUTSIDERS, MOSTLY FROM KASAI, PREPARING FOR EVACUATION THEMSELVES. WHILE INVADERS SEEM TO BE ENCOUNTERING LITTLE LOCAL RESISTANCE, SITUATION MIGHT CHANGE ONCE THEY ARE WEST OF 24 DEGREES EAST GREENWICH LINE WHICH IS APPROXIMATE END OF LUNDA/TSHOKWE AREA.

6. DIMINUTION OF SIGNS OF MILITARY PRESENCE AND TIGHT CONTROL HAVE RETURNED COPPERBELT TOWNS TO AIR OF NORMALCY. THIS PSYCHOLOGICAL MOVE HAS PREVENTED POPULATION FROM REALIZING SITUATION HAS DETERIORATED IN RECENT DAYS. AS MORE FLEEING SOLDIERS AND OTHERS FROM BORDER AREAS RETURN TO PEACEFUL AREAS
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WITH REPORTS OF BATTLE LOSSES AND FRONTLINE DIFFICULTIES, THE MOOD OF THE POPULATION CAN BE EXPECTED TO SHIFT. WHILE STRONG FEELINGS FOR KATANGAN INDEPENDENCE HAD DISAPPEARED OVER THE LAST DECADE, THEY REMAIN LATENT AMONG POPULATION NATIVE TO THE AREA. ALREADY ONE CAN SENSE A CERTAIN AMBIVALENCE OF VIEWS ABOUT MEANING OF THREAT AMONG THOSE PEOPLE BORN IN SHABA AS CONTRASTED TO THOSE BORN ELSEWHERE BUT NOW RESIDING SHABA. THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE CANNOT AFFORD A LONG, DRAWN-OUT SLOPPILY EXECUTED STRATEGY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, INVASIONS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LUBUMB00041
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770089-0010
Format: TEL
From: LUBUMBASHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770359/aaaabzqo.tel
Line Count: 148
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: 2127f8b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3105760
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UPDATE ON SHABA RESPONSE TO INVASION
TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, PINS, CG, AO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2127f8b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009